



CENTRAL MONTANA MEDICAL CENTER

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To Whom It May Concern:

The impact the Montana State University-Northern Nursing Program has in a rural area such as Lewistown is tremendous. Many non-traditional students attend the program, which gives them the opportunity for a higher education and caring for people in their community. Most of these students would not be able to attend a college or university away from their families. They are the wives, sons, and daughters of ranchers and farmers from Fergus, Wheatland, Petroleum, Phillips, and Judith Basin Counties. The closest university or college is over 100 miles away, which would cause hardship for these hard-working family businesses. Single mothers in this region also are provided advanced education opportunities at MSU-Northern in Lewistown.

Central Montana Medical Center invests in enhancing the knowledge of local residents regarding the use of health care services to help manage their personal health. We also strive to improve access to our community by expanding clinical services, enlarging the scope of services provided locally, and supporting community health improvement efforts. We would not be able to provide this service without the help of our student nurses.

The students receive excellent education and training in Lewistown, learning from and being supported by instructors who work at CMMC when they are not teaching. Students observe and assist patients in a variety of clinical areas, from trauma and surgery to orthopedics and other general medical conditions. It is important to remember that Lewistown is over a hundred miles from the closest tertiary hospital. CMMC saves lives every day.

Building and nurturing a partnership with MSU-Northern in Lewistown has produced many positive benefits for CMMC and the community. The collaboration between MSU-Northern and CMMC has fostered a sturdy and broad-ranged structure for both the students and staff. The nursing program provides our 25-bed hospital and 85 bed nursing facility with well-educated nurses who, due to their commitment to the community, are great assets as employees, which benefits staff retention and nurse shortage issues.

The following brief stories highlight the difference having a local campus has made:

In the fall of 1992, a woman whose husband was disabled returned to nursing school living three hours away from Lewistown and her four young children for two years to do so. They underestimated the sacrifice it would take. It was financially challenging to

maintain two households and travel back and forth in order to spend time with family. The hardest part was the emotional impact on her and her children, who greatly missed having a full-time mother.

Since that first story, MSU-Northern established a campus here in Lewistown.

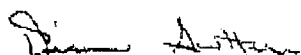
One of CMMC's registered nurses graduated from MSU-Northern Lewistown last spring. She came to us as a nurses' aide working on her pre-requisites for nursing school. She completed her pre-requisites, entered nursing school while working full-time, and graduated with honors. She is a young wife and mother of twins and is certainly a shining star for MSU-Northern and CMMC. Had nursing school not been available here, becoming a nurse would not have been possible for her.

Another young wife and mother was also working as a nurses' aide at CMMC when she decided she wanted to become a nurse. She began taking her pre-requisites with two very young children and completed the courses last spring. During the last semester of her pre-requisites she had a third baby. She has just completed first semester level one nursing here, making the honor roll while working part-time, and being a wife and mom. She has voiced many times that if nursing school were not available here, she would be unable to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse.

With a shortage of nursing, it is imperative that we promote and cultivate this program.

Thank you for listening!

Sincerely,



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